

### **Tab A**

*October 1, 1932 - Postal Laws and Regulations § 464, Paragraph 5:*

Laborers shall not be assigned to clerical duties. The work to which laborers shall be assigned consists of loading and unloading motor trucks, trucking mail in the office, setting up and taking down bag racks, dumping mail, making simple distribution of parcels by numbers where no scheme knowledge or reading of addresses is involved, operating canceling machines, cleaning and oiling canceling machines, conveyors, etc, carrying mail from canceling machines to distribution cases and from letter drops to facing tables, handling empty pouches and sacks, and such other similar work as the postmaster may direct.

### **Tab B**

*November 1, 1940 – Postal Laws and Regulations § 464, Paragraph 5:*

Laborers shall not be assigned to clerical duties. The work to which laborers shall be assigned consists of loading and unloading motor trucks, trucking mail in the office, setting up and taking down bag racks, dumping mail, making simple distribution of parcels by numbers where no scheme knowledge or reading of addresses is involved, operating canceling machines, cleaning and oiling canceling machines, conveyors, etc, carrying mail from canceling machines to distribution cases and from letter drops to facing tables, handling empty pouches and sacks, and such other similar work as the postmaster may direct.

### **Tab C**

*HR 2419, April 7, 1943*

Initially, this bill, introduced in the House of Representatives, April 7, 1943, proposed to change the name of “laborer” in the Postal Service to that of “assistant clerk.” On May 24, 1943, the bill was amended to replace “assistant clerk” with the job title of “mail handler.” The bill was passed and sent to the senate, where it was also passed on March 20, 1944. On April 20, 1943, Postmaster General Frank Walker, affirmed to the Congress that the only purpose of the bill was to change the classification of “laborer” to “mail handler,” and that the Post Office Department had “no objection.”

### **Tab D**

*Public Law 259, March 20, 1944*

HR 2419 is enacted into law by the House of Representatives and Senate as Public Law 259.

### **Tab E**

*December 28, 1948 – Postal Laws and Regulations § 464 Mail handlers’ Duties:*

§464. Mail handlers shall not be assigned to clerical duties. The work to which mail handlers shall be assigned consists of loading and unloading motor trucks, trucking mail in the office, setting up and taking down bag racks, dumping mail, making simple distribution of parcels ~~by numbers~~ where no scheme knowledge ~~or reading of addresses~~ is involved, operating canceling machines, cleaning and oiling ~~canceling~~ machines, conveyors, etc, carrying mail from canceling machines to distribution cases and from letter drops to facing tables, handling empty pouches and sacks, and such other similar work as the postmaster may direct.

This amendment made a big change in §464. While continuing prohibition on mail handlers performing clerical duties, mail handlers were no longer restricted to simple distribution of parcels **by numbers** where **no reading of the address** was involved.

### **Tab F**

*December 28, 1948 – Postal Laws and Regulations § 137.211 Assignment of Mail handlers:*

#### **§137.21 Assignment of mail handlers**

(a) **Restrictions.** A person employed merely as a mail handler or workman without examination under the civil service rules shall not be assigned to work of the grade performed by classified employees.

(b) **Duties.** Mail handlers shall not be assigned to clerical duties. The work to which mail handlers shall be assigned consists of loading and unloading motor trucks, trucking mail in the office, setting up and taking down bag racks, dumping mail, making simple distribution of parcels where no scheme knowledge is involved, operating canceling machines, cleaning and oiling machines, conveyors, etc, carrying mail from canceling machines to distribution cases and from letter drops to facing tables, handling empty pouches and sacks, and such other similar work as the postmaster may direct.

Mirrors the language in §464. Continues the prohibition on mailhandlers performing clerical duties. Interesting reference to those employed “merely as a mail handler...”

### **Tab G**

*Postal Bulletin No. 19279, October 27, 1949, Assignment of Mail Handlers Duties*

(b) **Duties.** ~~Mail handlers shall not be assigned to clerical duties.~~ The work to which mail handlers ~~shall~~ may be assigned consists of loading and unloading ~~motor~~ trucks; trucking mail ~~in the office~~; ~~setting up and taking down~~ hanging and locking sacks and pouches in bag racks; dumping mail; making simple distribution of parcels where no scheme knowledge is involved; separating mail pouches and sacks labeled to star routes and trains and Dis., local city and stations and branches; labeling sacks and pouches where labels are prearranged or where racks are plainly marked; carrying letter mail from letter drops to facing tables; facing mail, including letters and circulars on facing tables, mechanical or otherwise; operating canceling machines; canceling stamps and carrying mail from canceling machines to distribution cases; withdrawing

mail from primary or secondary separations and placing it in secondary and delivery units; assisting in tying and cutting bundles of mail; assisting in supply sections; acting as armed guards for valuable registry shipments and as watchmen and guards in and around post office building where necessary; serving as witness to receipt and dispatch of registered mail when no clerk is available; performing necessary cleaning work in leased quarters when such work cannot be performed by regular or job cleaners; driving Government trucks in emergencies in interstation service and to and from post offices and garages and relaying sacks of mail to storage boxes; collecting mail from courtesy collection boxes; delivering special-delivery mail in emergencies and assisting regular and substitute city delivery carriers in the collection and delivery of mail in emergencies. Erecting and occasionally painting and placing time cards in street letter-box equipment and posts; driving trucks in connection with the erection of street letter-box equipment; performing necessary patrol of conveyor systems; cleaning and oiling of firearms, canceling machines, and conveyor equipment, and similar duties, where such work is not performed by mechanics in the custodial service. Cleaning and sweeping inside Government trucks operated by city carriers; handling and examining empty equipment such as pouches and sacks. Such other similar work as the postmaster may direct., etc,

Only 10 months later, the Post Office amends mail handler duties, striking the prohibition on mail handlers perform clerical duties and specifying that mail handlers “may” perform duties normally performed by clerks, letter carriers, special delivery messengers, motor vehicle operators, and maintenance employees.

## **Tab H**

*HR 2987, January 25, 1955*

### **(8) POSITION – Mail Handler – Level 3.**

**Basic Function.** – Loads, unloads, and moves bulk mail, and performs other duties incidental to the movement and processing of mail.

#### **Duties and Responsibilities.** –

1. Unloads mail received by trucks. Separates all mail received by trucks and conveyors for subsequent dispatch to other conveying units, and separates and delivers working mails for delivery to distribution areas.
2. Places empty sacks or pouches on racks, labels them where labels are prearranged or racks are plainly marked, dumps mail from sacks, cuts ties, faces letter mail, carries mail to distributors for processing, places processed mail into sacks, removes filled sacks and pouches from racks, closes and locks same. Picks up sacks, pouches, and outside pieces, separates outgoing bulk mails for dispatch and loads mail onto trucks.
3. Handles and sacks empty equipment, inspects empty equipment for mail content, restrings sacks.
4. Cancels stamps on parcel post, operates canceling machines, carries mail from canceling machine to distribution cases.

5. Assists in supply and slip rooms and operates addressograph, mimeograph and similar machines.
6. In addition, may perform any of the following duties:
  - a. Acts as armed guard for valuable registry shipments and as watchman and guard around post office building.
  - b. Makes simple distribution of parcel post mail requiring no scheme knowledge.
  - c. Drives trucks in interstation service to and from post offices and garages, and in delivering sacks to relay boxes.
  - d. Operates electric fork-lift trucks.
  - e. Rewraps soiled or broken parcels.
  - f. Performs other miscellaneous duties, such as stamping tickets, weighing incoming sacks, cleaning and sweeping in workrooms, offices, and trucks where such work is not performed by regular cleaners.
7. As the needs of the service require, may perform other related duties of the same or lower level as assigned; occasionally may perform duties of a higher level.

Where previous regulations had prohibited mail handlers from performing higher level clerical duties, Congress now specifically recognizes that mail handlers may occasionally “perform duties of a higher level.”

### **Tab I**

*House Committee on PO & Civil Service Hearings, February 1955*

In testimony before the House of Representatives Committee on Post Office and Civil Service during February 1955, Assistant Postmaster General Eugene Lyons stated:

“I attempted to explain to the committee – unfortunately Mr. Doherty was absent during the days when the Department was presenting its analysis of the bill – the reason for the language in there. It is that when a man occasionally performs the higher duties, and I define occasionally as meaning infrequently, or is performing the lower duties, it maintains his salary so that it would not be necessary in case he performed the lower duties to reduce his salary.”

### **Tab J**

*Congressional Record, June 7, 1955*

Speaking on the floor of the House Representatives on June 7, 1955, Representative Thomas Jefferson Murray (D, Tennessee) reported:

“Your Committee on Post Office and Civil Service reported out this bill unanimously with two amendments. These two amendments are minor clarifying amendments. The first amendment merely affirms the view of the committee that the simple distribution of parcel post packages by mail handlers is an incidental or

occasional rather than a primary function of mail handlers. The second amendment clarifies the status of special delivery messengers under the bill.”

### **Tab K**

*House Report No. 728, Postal Field Compensation Act of 1955, June 2, 1955*

### **AMENDMENTS**

The amendments are as follows:

- (1) Page 13, line 17, after “Makes” insert “occasional”;
- (2) . . .

### **PURPOSE OF AMENDMENTS**

The first amendment merely affirms the view of the committee that the simple distribution of parcel-packages by mail handlers is an incidental (occasional) rather than a primary function.

### **Tab L**

*Public Law 68, November 1958*

### **(8) POSITION – Mail Handler – Level 3.**

**Basic Function.** – Loads, unloads, and moves bulk mail, and performs other duties incidental to the movement and processing of mail.

### **Duties and Responsibilities.** –

- (A) Unloads mail received by trucks. Separates all mail received by trucks and conveyors for subsequent dispatch to other conveying units, and separates and delivers working mails for delivery to distribution areas.
- (B) Places empty sacks or pouches on racks, labels them where labels are prearranged or racks are plainly marked, dumps mail from sacks, cuts ties, faces letter mail, carries mail to distributors for processing, places processed mail into sacks, removes filled sacks and pouches from racks, closes and locks same. Picks up sacks, pouches, and outside pieces, separates outgoing bulk mails for dispatch and loads mail onto trucks.
- (C) Handles and sacks empty equipment, inspects empty equipment for mail content, restrings sacks.
- (D) Cancels stamps on parcel post, operates canceling machines, carries mail from canceling machine to distribution cases.
- (E) Assists in supply and slip rooms and operates addressograph, mimeograph and similar machines.
- (F) In addition, may perform any of the following duties:
  - (i) Acts as armed guard for valuable registry shipments and as watchman and guard around post office building.

- (ii) Makes occasional simple distribution of parcel post mail requiring no scheme knowledge.
- (iii) Operates electric fork-lift trucks.
- (iv) Rewraps soiled or broken parcels.
- (v) Performs other miscellaneous duties, such as stamping tickets, weighing incoming sacks, cleaning and sweeping in workrooms, offices, and trucks where such work is not performed by regular cleaners.

## **Tab M**

*Personnel RM-36, Issue 211 §757.12.b, Mail Handler Positions, June 13, 1966*

### b. Mail Handler Positions

- (1) KP-8, mail handler, level 3, provides in item F(ii) for making “occasional simple distribution of parcel post mail requiring no scheme knowledge”. To avoid any misunderstanding of the use of the word “occasional” in the key position of mail handler, all mail handlers currently assigned full time or substantially full time to the simple distribution of parcel post requiring no scheme knowledge will continue to be designated as mail handler and ranked in level 3. The law is not interpreted as requiring any change in work assignments.

Only a dozen years later, and the Post Office is interpreting the intent of the law as having changed from “incidental or occasional and not a primary function” to now permit mail handlers to perform simple distribution of parcel post full-time without violating the intent of the law.